The Book of Video Games

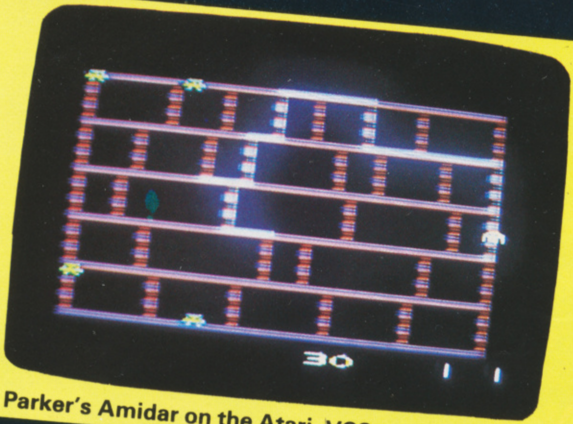
A Computer & Video Games Supplement

CHECK OUT COLECOVISION, VECTREX AND ATARI 5200

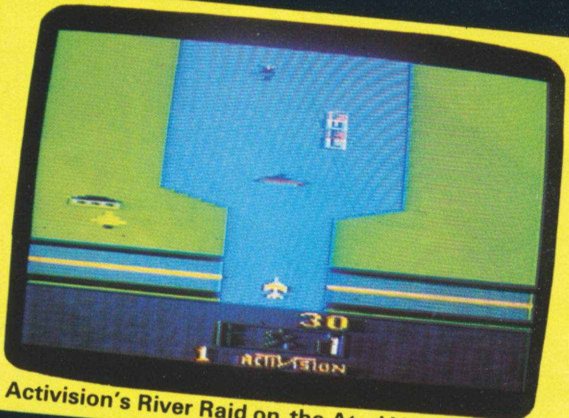
Plus cartridge news and reviews

STEP INTO THE GAMING FUTURE

Laser discs and holophonics



Parker's Amidar on the Atari VCS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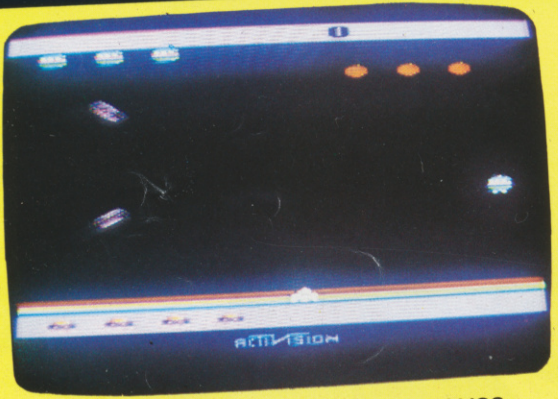
Activision's River Raid on the Atari VCS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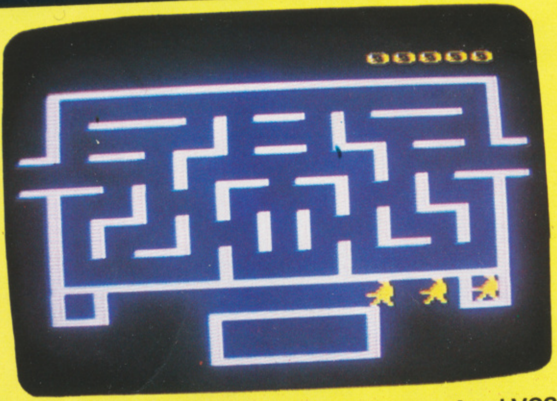
ACTIVISION

Activision's Spider Fighter on the Atari VCS



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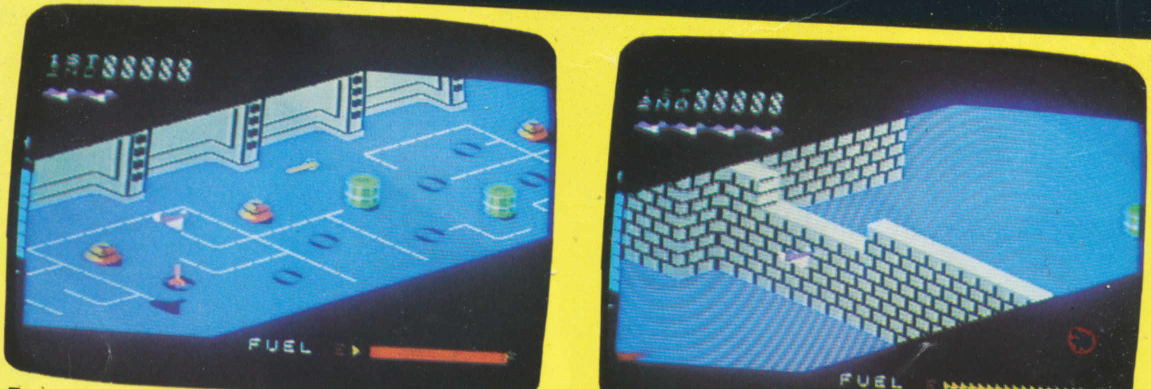
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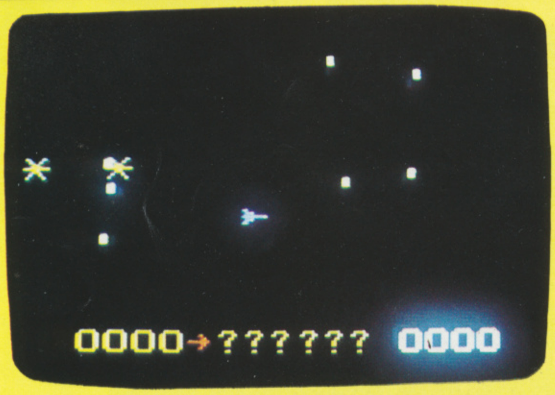
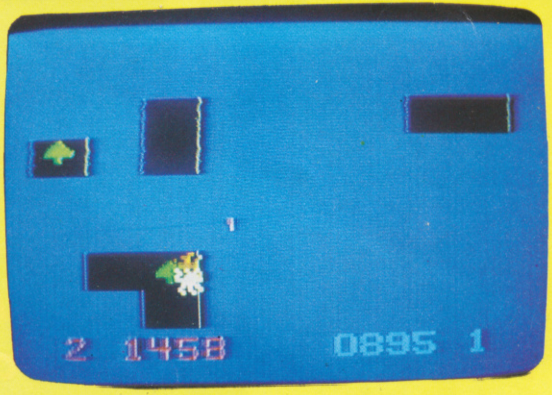
Zaxxon on the Colecovision: Over the Fortress' defences and approaching the wall



Freedom Fighter on the Philips G7000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Laser discs, holophonic sound and vibra chairs. Just what will you need to play video games in the future? Steve Bloom asked two top arcade experts what technology has in store for the gamers.

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New games for old! Well not quite but we are offering you a chance to swap those titles you've blasted once too often. So look out those games which have drifted to the back of the collection.

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Games Screening 19

You'll see eight games pictured in glorious colour opposite and there's eight more to check out on page 19. The back page features Illustrated News.

VIDEO SCREEN TOP TEN

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2 **FROGGER** – Atari VCS; Parker
3 **DEMON ATTACK** – Atari VCS; Imagic
4 **PITFALL** – Atari VCS; Activision
5 **DEFENDER** – Atari VCS; Atari
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News

ATARI SCORE A WINNER!

If your favourite football team had a lousy season and the thought of six months of cricket looms like a black cloud then Atari's new Soccer cartridge should provide some welcome good cheer.

Two people can play simultaneously controlling three players each. The player you want to move at any given time is selected by pressing the joystick fire button. The chosen player will then turn white and can be moved up down or left and right. The pitch scrolls horizontally in a direction dictated by the player in possession of the ball. The fire button is also used to shoot and pass.

The referee's whistle can be clearly heard as can the roar of the fans when a goal is scored by one of your video superstars.

This Soccer cartridge is a big improvement on Atari's earlier soccer simulation – Pele Soccer – and is in the shops now at £18.99.

MY NAME IS BOND – 007

After E.T., Raiders of the Lost Ark, Superman II and Tron, James Bond 007 makes his debut on the games screen.

After arcade titles, cinema heroes are the next best bet for a top video games cartridge and this particular cartridge will have two Bond films to help its sales.

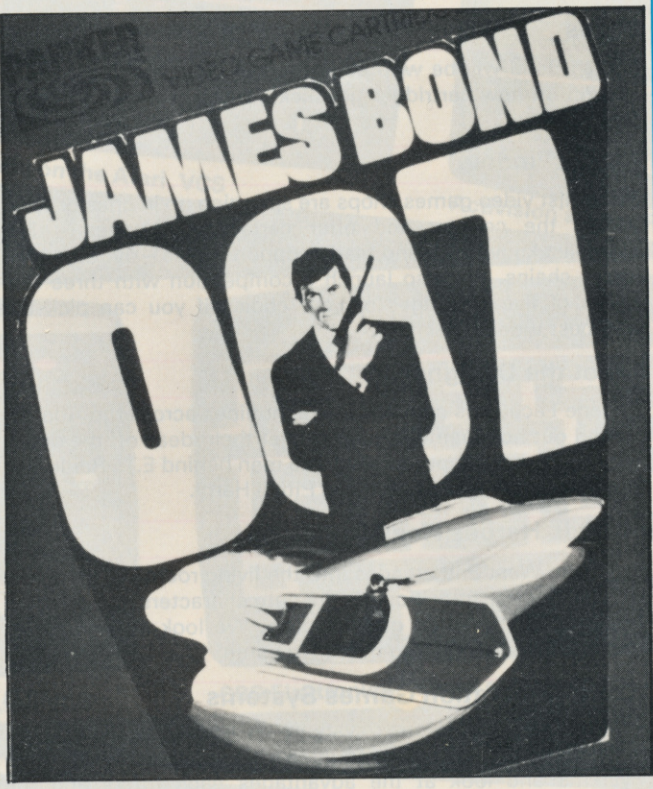
It comes from Parker and is associating itself with Octopussy, featuring Roger Moore as the stirring but never shaken British secret agent.

That is the official Bond movie for this summer but the original screen Bond, Sean Connery, is back a new title, Never Say Never later this year.

Octopussy will be released in the West End this month but goes on general release in August when the Parker cartridge is due out.

In the cartridge the player takes the part of James Bond on a worldwide adventure in which the action takes place in the air, car, boat and even on foot.

He is chased by hoodlums from the evil Smersh syndicate across the world.



UK VIDEO PENTATHLON

The first UK video games Pentathlon was held recently in Birmingham.

The event was staged by the Activision Fun Club and *Look In* magazine.

Forty finalists were chosen from over 500 qualified members who had achieved sufficient scores on Activision cartridges.

In true Olympic Pentathlon tradition the competition was based on five events: Starmaster, Pitfall, Stampede, Megamania and Chopper Command.

The two winners are John Barber from Walsall and Andrew Davis from Walshaw near Bury, grab an all-expenses paid holiday in California this summer.

BOUNTY BOB DIGS DEEP

Miner 2049'er has been carving out a considerable reputation for itself in the States and will shortly be available in the UK.

You play the part of Bounty Bob mining radioactive ore in the year 2049. Collect the equipment left behind by an earlier prospecter and then stake your claim before moving on to the next mine. Each mine is different and has an assortment of articles to be picked up in it. The Donkey Kong-like game has 10 levels of screens.

The game will be available in the UK in June imported by Gemini Electronics of Manchester.

KEY TO THE ATARI VCS

A host of new peripherals are in the pipeline from Atari and scheduled for releases this year.

The most significant of these is a computer keyboard which turns your Atari VCS into a home computer.

It features 8K of Random Access Memory for user programs and has a Sinclair Spectrum- style rubberised keyboard.

Programs can be saved on a normal cassette recorder which is hooked up through an expansion port.

The keyboard attaches through the cartridge slot and sits directly on top of the VCS.

Prices have yet to be confirmed but it is expected to sell for slightly less than £100.

Other exciting peripherals on the way from Atari are a set of remote control joysticks, a trackball controller to give that arcade touch to games like Missile Command and Centipede, and a souped up super joystick called the Pro-line.

SHOOT THOSE LITTLE ALIENS

Three new Bomb cartridges have just been imported by Pancom of Grimsby for the Atari VCS.

Z Tack challenges you to bomb the aliens defences. You must move your ship in the direction you want to bomb before pressing the fire button.

Great Escape is an alien shoot 'em up in which the aliens scroll towards you in all directions.

The most original of the bunch is Wall Defender in which you must penetrate a maze structure to fire your one missile at the aliens.

Bomb cartridges are all available at £19.95 in UK – compatible PAL format.

Two other titles are available in the Bomb range which you may have read about in last month's *C&VG* – Assault, and Splendour.

COILS OF THE SERPENTS

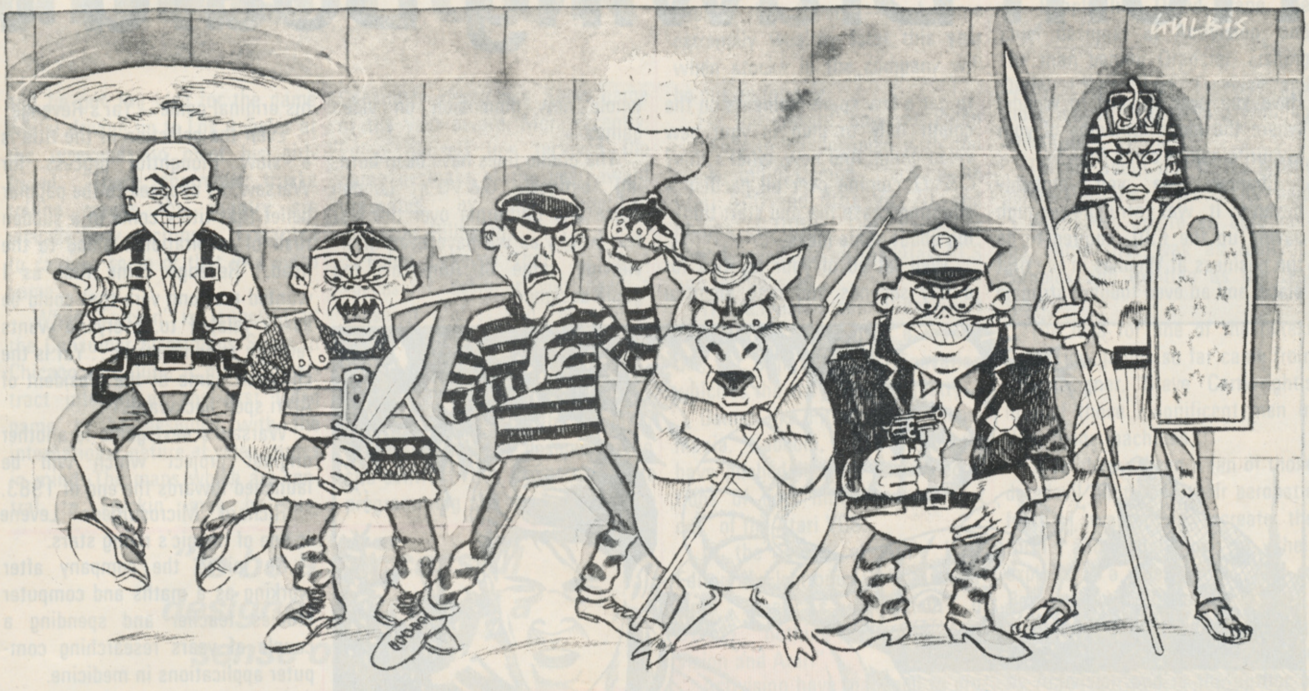
Swords and Serpents is the latest graphic adventure from Imagin for the Intellivision games machine.

Following in the footsteps of Riddle of the Sphinx and Dragonfire the game has a lot to live up to.

The plot is based on the dying words of a king of an ancient kingdom. "Would that I could die as I was born, in our family's ancestral land" . . . "Reclaim our conquered kingdom my son. Defy the sinister serpent. Prevail against its henchmen. Restore our tarnished pride . . . Defy . . . prevail . . . restore".

As the young prince and heir to the kingdom its all up to you. Don't miss next month's C&VG for a comprehensive review of the game and news of a super Swords and Serpents competition. The game available from your local Imagic stockist now at £29.95.

Shop Window



MEET THE VIDEO VILLAINS

It's seldom that the characters represented below will let you win anything.

But in this competition you could pick up three star prizes of your choice of five TV games centre cartridges. So if there's five cartridges for your machine that you'd like to get your hands on, have a go.

Easy Video, the new video games specialist shop in West Drayton, Middlesex is putting up the prizes for anyone who can put these six video villains in order of toughness — the hardest to play against being No. 1.

Artist Stephen Gulbis has drawn his representation of six of the meanest malcreants ever to haunt a TV games machine.

In case you're not familiar with them all, they are: Activision's deadly Kaboom, the mad bomber; one of Parkers' point-pinching Amidar pigs; Mattel's callous cop from Lock n' Chase; a warrior orc from Philips' Quest for the Ring; a desert nomad from Imagic's Riddle of the Sphinx; and Lex Luther and his hovercopter, the chief hoodlum from Atari's Superman.

The entries need to be back with us by June 16th when we sort through them to find out who has got the villains in the order of toughness, 1 to 6. The first three out of the hat win their choice of software.

We also have 10 runners-up prizes of five video games cartridge holders for those who come close. The judges' decision is final and no employees or EMAP or Easy Video or their relatives can enter.

THE RIVER RAID CHALLENGE

River Raid puts you at the controls of a B1 assault jet. Your mission is to fly up river as far as you can get destroying the enemy's ships, jets, choppers, and bridges.

You may also bomb the fuel dumps or fly over them if you are getting low on fuel.

This new game from Activision offers you the unique challenge of turning all points on the screen to asterisks if you can notch up that elusive one millionth point.

Computer and Video Games and Activision's UK importers, Computer Games Limited, will reward this considerable achievement with a free copy of June's other new release — Spiderfighter.

According to Computer Games, anyone managing this feat will be among the best video gamers around.

All you have to do is blast your way to a million points. Take a photograph of the screen and send it to our offices: Computer & Video Games, Durrant House, 8, Herbal Hill, London EC1R 5JB. Mark the envelope, "River Raid".

Spiderfighter cartridges will be awarded to the first three correct entries to reach our offices. The judges' decision will be final.

Just one tip from the game's designer, Carol Shaw, line up the nose of your jetfighter with the 'f' on the fuel tank then fire. This will get you points and fuel and is the key to a really high score. Get blasting.

BRIDGING THE GAMES GAP

A new breed of specialised video games shops are beginning to open up throughout the country.

These shops offer a comprehensive range of games and new systems to the video games fan filling the gaps in the ranges of games on offer at the video games counter in your local Woolworths or W. H. Smith.

They also offer video games a chance to try out the cartridge they have their eye-on before they part with the money.

And they can also bring in staff with specialist knowledge of the market.

The best known of these shops is Sidcup-based Silica Shop who have recently advertised their wares on television. But Silica will not be the sole video games specialists any longer.

More recently, West Drayton based Easy Video opened their brand new video games shop in the presence of *Star Wars* super villain — Darth Vader.

The shop offers the complete range of Atari, Activision, Imagic, Coleco, and Intellivision range of games and hardware for hire and for sale.

From Drawing Board to g

Have you ever stopped to wonder where the ideas for some of your favourite games come from?

Chances are you probably haven't. It was struggle enough saving up the £30 required to do the business at Woolies in the first place, and an even tougher struggle to get a few spare moments on the colour telly to plug in your new video game. And now, what's this? *C&VG* coming over all pacifist – shouting cease fire and start thinking about game ideas.

Well let go of your joystick for a few seconds and read about a whole new dimension on video games.

The phone lines have been burning between *C&VG's* London office and California over the last few weeks as we have been interviewing some of America's top game designers.

"Spielburg is a real fan of Video Games . . ."

Howard Warsaw is one of the elite corp of Atari's top game designers. At 25 he is among the crème de la crème of Sunnyvale's celebrity programmers – with three "big hits" under his belt so far – Yar's Revenge, *ET*, and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

All three games have sold more than a million copies worldwide. The rewards for this phenominal success have been considerable, though Warsaw is characteristically coy about just how well off he is. "I'm well healed but not ready to retire".

Money is something that no games designer working for Atari can ever lose sight of as enormous sums of money are often spent to buy film and arcade rights, the raw materials around which many new games are built. Steven Spielberg is reported to have received between $20 and 30 million for the rights to license *ET*.

Despite the pressure this placed on Warsaw he regards the Spielberg games as his proudest achievement – involving as they did the opportunity to work closely with the world's most famous film producer.

"Spielberg is a real fan of video games... and believes that there are many simularities between making films and video games".

In order to get the ideas worked out for *Raiders of the Lost Ark* Warsaw sat through this film four times while he only had to see *ET* once to make up his mind. "I knew straight away the game would consist of helping *ET* find the various bits of his telephone, get him to phone home, and get his friends down to rescue him".

He is skeptical about designers who claim to have ideas for games in a lightening flash. His ideas come from a careful study of the VCS. "I look for the idiosyncracies of the system before I start thinking about game ideas".

This technique has been a successful one and enabled Warsaw to produce the first full screen explosion as the climax to his original game – Yar's Revenge.

Even the selection of the title is a slow thoughtful process for Warsaw, as opposed to the popular belief that titles come in a sudden rush of inspirational blood to the head. "Revenge came first as I wanted a strong verb that could be easily related to. Everyone wants revenge at some stage... Yar is the christian name of the president of Atari spelt backwards!"

Warsaw's next game is another original project which will be launched towards the end of 1983.

Richard "Microsurgeon" Levene is one of Imagic's rising stars.

He joined the company after working as a maths and computer studies teacher and spending a couple of years researching computer applications in medicine.

Levene's background provided the inspiration for his best known game – Microsurgeon in which the player controls a tiny ship which he guides around the human anatomy battling it out with germs and healing diseased organs.

The game is also similar to the film *Fantastic Voyage* in which a probe which has been reduced in size millions of times and is injected into the body of a top scientist. Levene acknowledges the influence of *Fantastic Voyage* on his game and admits to being impressed with the book which he has read more than once.

He was extremely excited about the game when he first thought of the idea, soon after his interview for the position of games designer with Imagic. His enthusiasm for the project soon spread through Imagic and the game was well received by the public who purchased it into the top ten best-selling games for November and December of '82.

Levene displays the usual evasiveness of video game designers when asked how much money the games have earned them: "I measure my wealth in 10 of thousands rather than in millions" though – like Fulop, he is looking forward to being much better off when Imagic shares are floated on America's Wall Street.

His next game is called Truckin'

o games Pack

and he got the idea for the game whilst driving up to Los Angeles at the weekends to meet his girlfriend: "These enormous trucks rolling across the country are visually very exciting... I wanted to capture some of that in a video game".

When Truckin' is launched at the Consumer Electronics Show in Chicago this June it may also attract interest as the first video game to be designed with the international nature of video games in mind. The maps which are central to Truckin' may be customised for each individual country in which the game is to be sold.

> **"to be a successful designer you need a sense of fun . . ."**

Rob Fulop is probably the hottest young designer in the new Klondyke of Silicon valley USA.

To be "hot" in video game industry slang means to be the designer/programmer of one of more successful games. Fulop, with mega hit Demon Attack behind him is therefore hotter than most of his rivals.

The shoot-'em-up game with the exotic bird-like aliens needs no introduction to experienced VCS-tronauts but for the uninitiated it is the toughest space battle you are likely to see on your machine.

No less than 84 waves of exquisitely drawn aliens are set in the silicon of this cartridge and queuing up to attack your laser base.

Not that you are likely to get to the 80th or even the 70th wave for that matter, until you have been blasting away at the game for several weeks. And herein is the beauty of Demon Attack. It's so tough you just can't put it down — not only for the simple satisfaction of getting onto the next wave but also because you are dying to see what they will look like.

Demon Attack stayed at the number one spot in the U.S. for several months and was the best selling game of 1982; winning the Consumer Electronics Show game of the year award. More recently, Fulop himself has received the game designer of the year award presented by the American magazine-Billboard.

Fulop believes that "to be a successful designer you need a sense of fun"... and "be able to appreciate the appearance of the unexpected".

Game development for Fulop is a product of six months gruelling work. Unlike some designers who sub-contract out aspects of the programming and marketing, Fulop sees the entire project through from start to finish. He works for periods of four hours on and then takes four hours off for physical exercise. This strict regime is crucial to Fulop's mental and physical fitness during the crucial development of a game.

At only 24 the sky's the limit for this co-founder of Imagic. He is likely — like Levene — to become extremely wealthy later this year when stocks in the company will be put up for sale.

For the present, however, Fulop is likely to be occupied with the conversion of Demon Attack for the Atari 400 and 800, Vic 20, and Philips G7000. The game is already available on the Atari VCS and Intellivision.

The Activision team of designers have earned themselves a reputation for orginality and innovation which is the envy of the industry.

Games like Pitfall Harry, Megamania, Kaboom, and Starmaster have pushed forward the expectations of how much can be "got out" of the Atari VCS.

In the words of Arnie Katz, Editor of Electronic Games Magazine, America's equivalent of *C&VG* "nothing sells like Activision and Atari".

Activision have managed to provide serious competition for Atari without an open cheque book policy of buying the rights to films and arcade games for enormous sums of money. Most of their games have been original and have had to stand or fall on their own merits.

The designers have therefore been crucial to the Activision set up. People like David Crane, the chief designer at Activision, and the man behind Dragster, Fishing Derby, Laser Blast, Freeway and most recently the award winning smash hit — Pitfall.

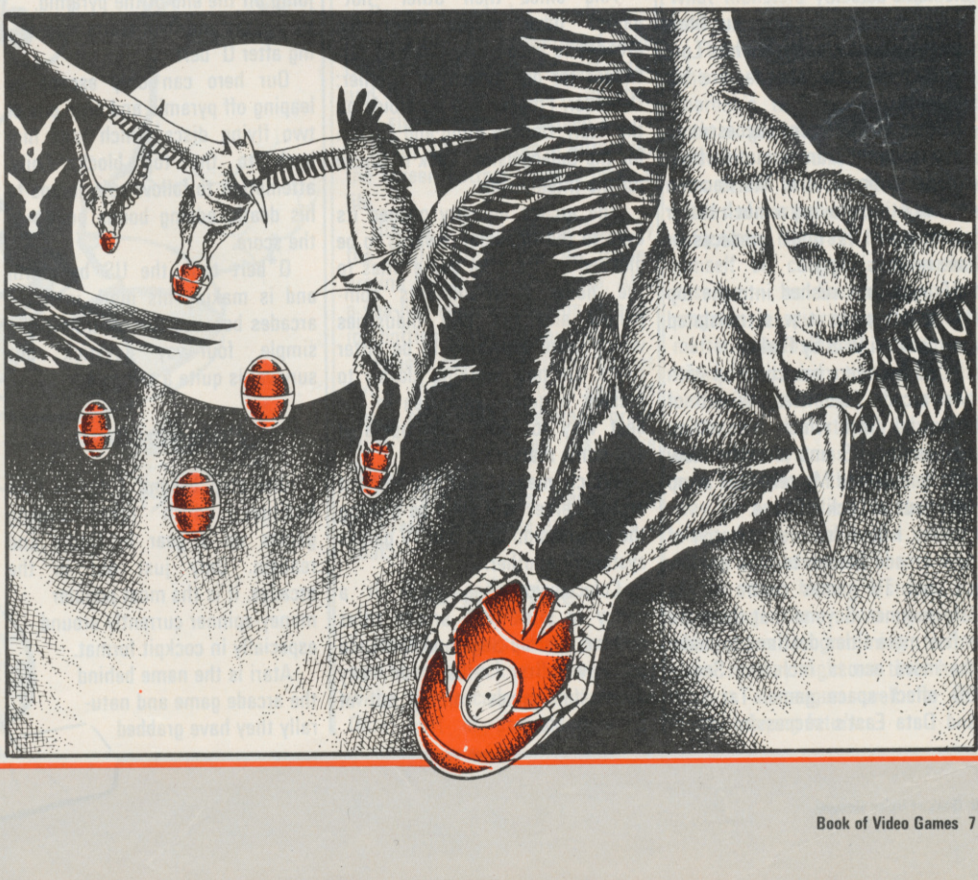
Talking about one of his recent games —Grand Prix, Crane said "I wanted to create an auto racing game that was as realistic, complex and exciting as the real sport".

The idea for one of the cutest Activision games so far came from net designer, Steve Cartwright's love of those magnificent men in their flying machines.

"I've always been a fan of those daredevil pilots and their aerobatic feats. I wanted to recreate the thrill and challenge of their exploits in a video game." And so Barnstorming was born.

One of the few female designers in the business is employed by Activision and is the author of their latest game — River Raid. Carol Shaw's super-tough shoot up gives the lie to the popular industry myth that one reason women are not so keen on video tames as men is because of their aggressive orientation.

Not true — or Carol's the exception. Don't miss our fun River Raid competition on page 4.



LICENSED TO KILL AT HOME

Charting the progress of a video game idea can be a complicated process as a title bounces between licensing deals.

But a usual route for the successful game, takes it from the arcades to reappear on a TV games centre some six to eight months later.

From its appearance in this format, it is only a short leap to the microcomputer version (often coming out under a different title for copyright reasons).

It will appear in hand-held form, translated into liquid crystal display on a credit card sized screen or tabletop machine, somewhere on route.

Licensing has become a cutthroat business, with some arcade manufacturers tying their products to a certain software house, while others sell off a successful title to the highest bidder.

But software houses looking for good licenses to buy must now take a risk on buying a title before it has been tried and tested in an arcade site. Inevitably a few arcade flops will turn up in TV centre catalogues but this is no bad thing as a game which will earn few fans when they have to part with 20p to play it, may adapt well to the home screen.

Not only arcade games but films and even books – Parker has Lord of the Rings out soon – are big business.

Some of the recent successes to have made the transformation from arcade to home, are: Ms Pacman for the Atari, proving a much better game than its male predecessor (see reviews page).

Frogger has rushed into the top 10 sellers since it was translated for the Atari VCS by Parker.

CBS Software has come up with two arcade favourites, Wizard of Wor and Gorf which are selling well in the US and should follow suit here. While Mattel made a top seller out of Lock n'Chase.

Here I have featured a batch of new arcade heroes to look out for on your TV games centre in the late summer. Beyond that there are a few more titles destined to make the move across, including Sega's 3D effect space game, Tac-Scan and Data East's successful crashing and driving game, Burnin' Rubber – possibly under its US title, Bump'n'Jump.

The Tac-Scan game will be featuring on the Colecovision with a super expander cartridge which will boost it into a games-player's delight.

The expander comes in the form of 128K of Ram which will greatly boost its current 17K capacity and should open up a whole new wealth of arcade games for conversion to the home television screen.

There is still no date set for its release either in this country or the US, but it will mean that the games centres will be able to keep the latest arcade games in their sight for some time to come.

Other possibilities for the future are Fast Freddie which may well find its way onto one Atari system or the other.

And Parker already has a servicable version of Super Cobra all set to blast its way through the caverns and over the cities.

Q★bert

Space invaders were the magic words which sent Atari VCS sales soaring in the UK back in spring 1981.

And since then other "hot" games have moved from the arcades to become best-selling cartridges for one system or another: Defender, Frogger and Asteroids on the Atari; Donkey Kong and Zaxxon for the Colecovision; Lock n' Chase for the Intellivision.

The arcade industry opened its eyes to the financial rewards to be gleaned in licensing game titles to the home entertainments companies and the two industries which were expecting to be bitter rivals, are now working closely to present a good game idea in the best way for both coin operated and home markets.

Which means that the current arcade heroes will soon be making the progression onto one TV games system or another.

Colecovision has made it a policy to stick with arcade titles and has tied up Sega and Nintendo to have first refusal on any successful games coming out of either stable.

Other software companies are battling it out for other titles. Some of the ones you can expect to find shortly are laid out here.

Lovable Q*bert the pseudopod living a precarious existance on a coloured column has been bought up by Parker to add to their Atari VCS range.

Q*bert, whose trademark is an obscure swear word he comes out with at the end of his life, earns his crust by leaping from one segment to another on a pyramid of cubes. Each cube he lands on changes its top colour and the object is to change the whole pyramid without leaping to destruction, or being caught by one of the nasties which shares his pyramid.

The most dangerous of these is Coily the Snake, who begins life bounding down from the top of the pyramid, hoping to meet Q*bert mid-jump or find himself on the same square.

Q*bert pays the penalty of this meeting by promptly dying.

He is joined in this activity by Q*bert's other enemies, Slick Sam, Ugg and Wrong Way. But Coily has the advantage over the rest, which all jump off the end of the pyramid. He pauses and then starts leaping after Q*bert.

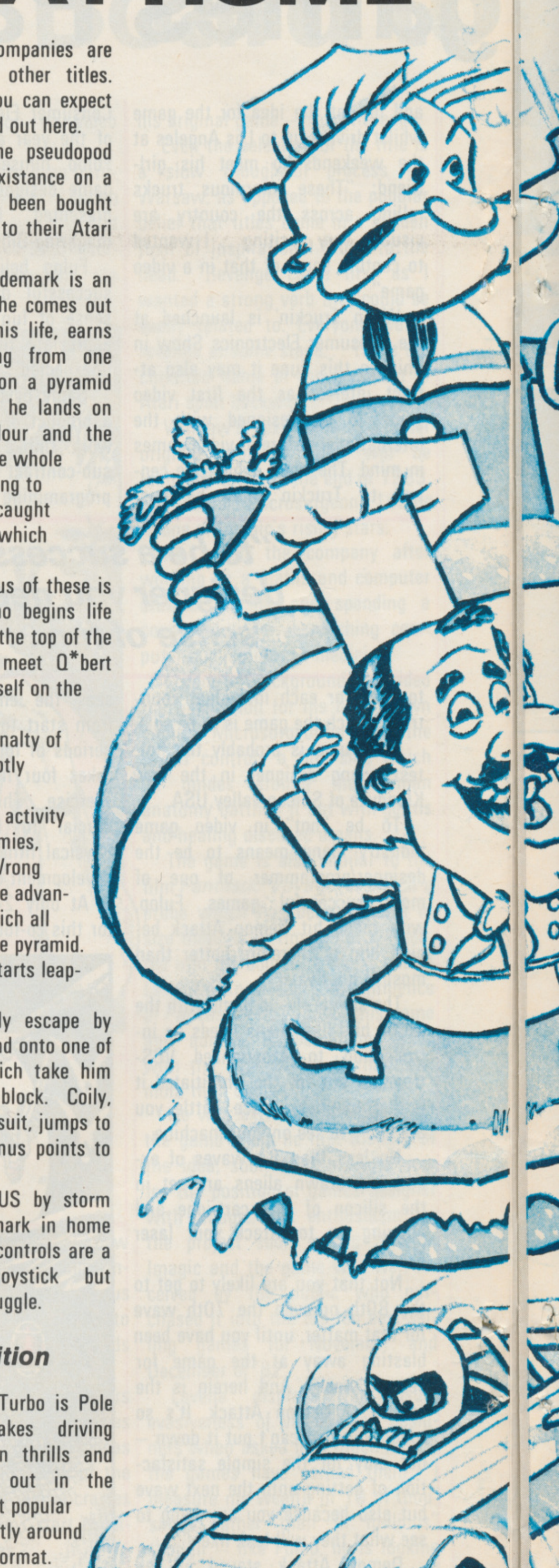
Our hero can only escape by leaping off pyramid and onto one of two flying discs which take him back to the top block. Coily, attempting to follow suit, jumps to his death, adding bonus points to the score.

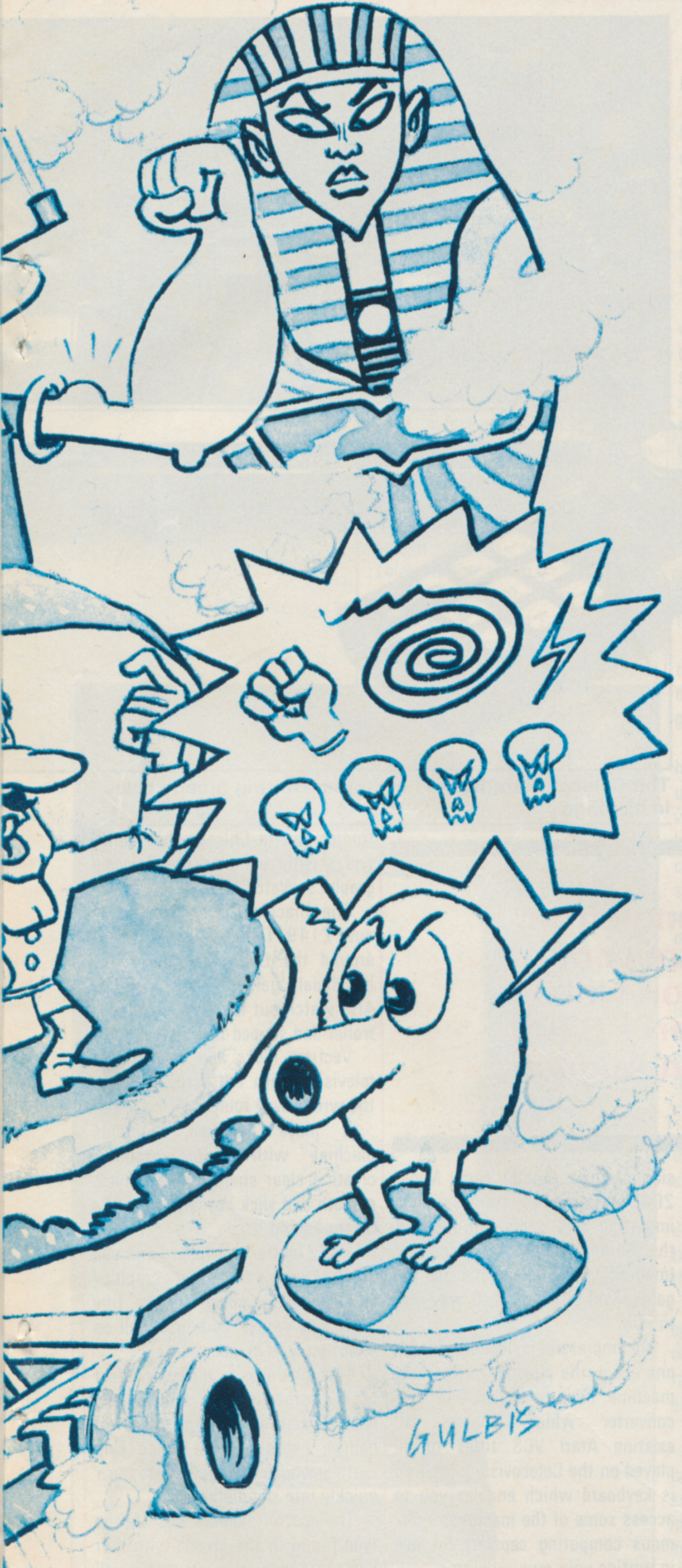
Q*bert took the US by storm and is making his mark in home arcades because the controls are a simple four-way joystick but survival is quite a struggle.

Pole Position

One step beyond Turbo is Pole Position, which takes driving games up a gear in thrills and realism. Only just out in the arcades, it is the most popular money-spinner currently around especially in cockpit format.

Atari is the name behind the arcade game and naturally they have grabbed





the rights to the home product. Although how the marvellous graphics will survive the transformation to the home unit, remains to be seen.

Pole Position comes in two parts. The setting is a Grand Prix and the first test is a qualifying race, to earn your place on the starting grid.

There is a realistic gear change system, a marvellously throaty acceleration and a responsive wheel. But what makes Pole Position is the realistic graphics with rival cars changing shape as they follow every turn of the track in front of you.

Take a corner too quickly and the car threatens to leave the track, complete with warning tyre squeals.

A successful qualifier sees you lining up for the race proper waiting for the green light to start threading your way through the computer controlled cars.

Popeye

Parker has another winner making the transition to the home in Popeye. Already a proven cartoon hero, Popeye has just made his arcade debut and will be appearing on the Parker Atari range.

Popeye spends his arcade time, chasing after his sweeetheart Olive Oyl's dropped kisses, musical notes and the letters "H.E.L.P." as they drift slowly down the screen.

If any kisses, notes or letters hit the screen bottom, Popeye loses a life.

His job is made more difficult by the Bully Brutus as he rushes around trying to belt Popeye. Also a sea-hag causes problems by hurling bottles at the old sea-dog.

Popeye can punch these bottles out of the way and, if he gets his hands on a can of the magic green stuff- spinach,he can also take Brutus to task.

The action takes place on a dockyard, warehouse and finally a boat.

Burger Time

Mattel, makers of the Intellivision, have struck a lucrative deal with the arcade manufacturers Data East of Japan. After the success of Lock n' Chase comes Burger Time. This game features a chef hounded by the very food he hopes to leave languishing in a series of burgers he is preparing.

The burgers are actually far larger than the chef who is chased by egg, sausages and pickles around a scaffolding-covered screen with buns, burger and salad waiting to be dropped into the plates at the bottom of the screen.

Each time he runs over a piece of food it drops down a level until a plate of finished burgers lies waiting. To thwart the more active ingrediants, the chef is armed with a pepper-pot which he can sprinkle over the ingrediants, rendering them temporarily inert. If he can then send a piece of burger or bun crashing down on them, they become part of the finished burger and he adds a bonus to his score.

A completed screen takes him onto the next one.

Tutankham

The final Parker title to be thrust into the glare of the living room fire is Tutankham (Japanese for Tutenkhamun). This maze game features a radar screen to show which part of the maze you are currently working through and what monsters you can expect to find.

The hero is an intrepid explorer who hopes to uncover the lost Pharoah's treasure. He is armed with a gun which can only fire sideways and only that and his wits stand between him and the hordes of nasties which inhabit the catacombs. Naturally he cannot let himself be caught in a vertical passage — no fire power — but progress is spurred by the use of matter transformer chambers which whizz him through to the next part of the maze.

Arcades are staying ahead of the home systems by using any new technology that comes their way to add realism to their displays and increase the player's feeling of involvement.

But the home systems are improving their own graphics, using new programming techniques to stay right on their heels and it all augers well for the games-playing future.

Three big new video games systems are now competing for shelf space in our high street shops.

The arrival of the so called "third generation" of home video games systems has come as something of a shock to the increasingly home computer-minded leisure industry. The conventional wisdom the industry is that home computers will kill-off video games systems by the end of 1984.

This view is usually most vociferously put by people who have not seen Zaxxon or Donkey Kong on the Colecovision, played Mine Storm or Rip Off on the Vectrex, or Centipede and Pacman on the Atari 5200.

Quite simply, if you want to play video games at home, no home computer has the range and quality of arcade titles that are available for these new machines.

In this article we test out the three new systems and look at some of the highlights in the current range of games.

Most exciting of the three new systems is the Colecovision which is the baby of the giant CBS Electronics company.

This new system is the first "third generation" video game machine to go on sale in the UK.

The video games boom was sparked off by the early bat and ball type game which were often given away free with new TV sets.

The next big breakthrough came with programmable video games with the Atari VCS is the best known. This type of machine can play an infinite number of games by simply purchasing a plug-in cartridge of your choice.

The third generation systems are really only an upgrading of these second generation machines adding up to 10 times the computer memory of the Atari VCS to produce graphics and game play.

The Colecovision has some 32K of Rom and 17K of Ram nestling under its ordinary looking black exterior. This makes it several times more powerful than all of the current video games systems currently on sale and more powerful than most of the popular micro computers as well.

Converted to gamers' language this means greater detail, more moving characters than were previously possible and greatly enhanced sound and colour.

The Colecovision: backed by some exciting arcade titles in its range

The games range available for the Colecovision is second to none. Through massive investment on the part of CBS, Ideal's parent company, Colecovision owns the rights to several big hit games from the arcades.

Perhaps the best known of these is Donkey Kong – the climbing game with the manic gorilla, blond starlet and Mad Mario the cute carpenter and the hero of this game.

Zaxxon is widely regarded as the state-of-the-art for graphics in the arcades. The flying fortress with the deep blue walls, ground-to-air missiles the robot and electronic force fields is more playable on the Colecovision than it is in the arcades.

Other highlights from the arcades includes Turbo – the 3D driving game with a wide-range of background scenery. It comes complete with its own steering wheel and accelerator which plug into the master component.

Also in the game range is Gorf, Carnival, Venture, Smurf, Cosmic Avenger, Wizard of Wor, Lady Bug and Mouse Trap.

The challenge from the Vectrex and Colecovision will be met by Atari's 5200 machine in August

Taking big name games from the arcades will be deliberate policy to support the Colecovision. The games will also be available for the Atari VCS, and Intellivision through parent company CBS, which should help Coleco recoup some of the enormous amounts of money needed to buy the rights.

Independent software looks like a certain prospect for the Colecovision as the machine is selling so well in the US.

The independent software house – Tigervision, have already announced that they will be producing the first independent game for the Coleco when they launch a version of their popular game Miner 2049'er. Gemini Electronics will be importing this game into the UK this Summer and if Activision and Imagic follow Tigervision's lead the games will also find their way into the UK.

An impressive selection of add-ons are in the pipeline for the new machine. First to appear will be a converter which enables all existing Atari VCS titles to be played on the Colecovision. Next up is keyboard which enables you to access some of the machines enormous computing capacity for use in writing your own programs.

Rumours are circulating of an expander for the Colecovision to be launched at the Consumer Electronics Fair in Chicago this month will greatly enhance the Coleco's graphics. Watch this space.

The machine is in the shops now £149. The expander will cost around the £50 mark, and most individual games cost £29.95. Also watch out for a trackball controller and souped-up joystick.

Vectrex looks like a portable television with the screen built-in the wrong way round.

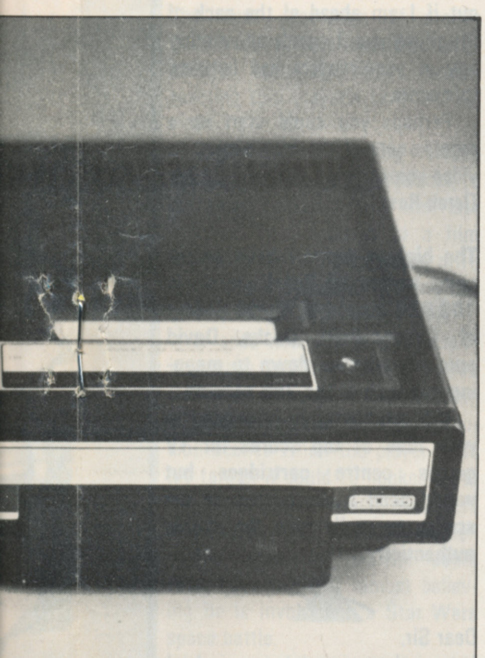
It plays like an Asteroids machine with vector graphics creating clear single line graphics, smooth and slick but with only one colour behind it.

The current video games systems rely on raster graphics which are composed of the tiny pixel dots which reproduce well on your home TV screen.

This produces a different effect to the other games centres and lends itself to certain types of games, especially the space ship battles where the crafts disappear quickly into the distance.

The control panel is close to the type found in the arcade with four buttons and a joystick on a small detachable panel, connected to the master unit by a spiralled lead.

The Vectrex comes with just



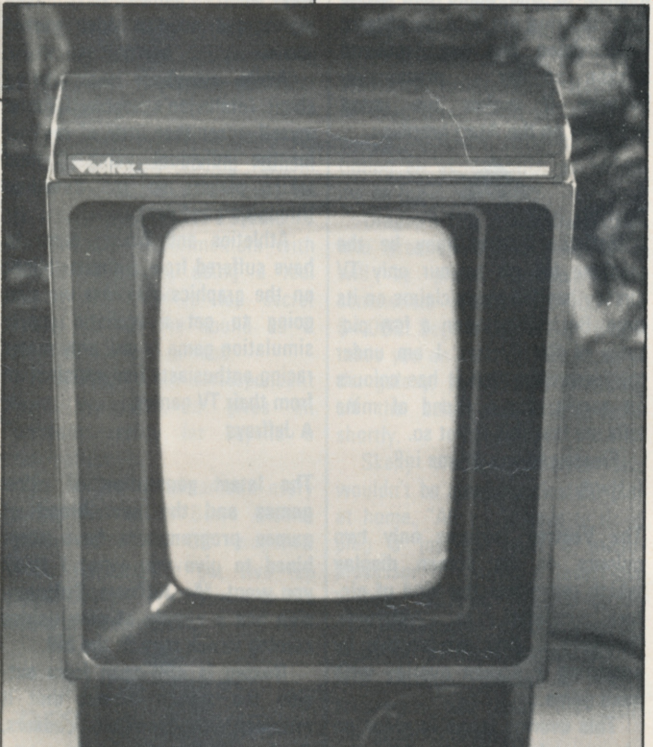
one panel — but a second is available for two-player games — and with a game called Mine Storm already lodged in its 64K of memory.

Mine Storm is a kind of superior asteroids with strange craft drifting through space instead of the meteors of the arcade game. The controls are left and right rotation, fire, thrust and hyperspace.

It makes the most of the vector graphics' strengths: fast movement, spectacular explosions and a believable 3D effect.

In fact the Vectrex's main drawback, a lack of colour, is also got around quite effectively by including a thin coloured overlay which comes with every Vectrex game and fits neatly over the screen adding some necessary colour to the action.

A volume control can make the Vectrex a quiet partner for unobstrusive gaming, or allow it to boom out its accompanying sound effects and introductory tunes.



The Vectrex: built-in television screen with vector graphics for smoother action

Cartridges to change the game from Mine Storm, fit into the side of the machine, much the same as any other home video system. The Vectrex unit — with Mine Storm included — costs around £140 and the cartridges are a standard price of £19.95 each.

Space games work extremely well in the vector format and many of the range of 13 games use a space theme to good effect. Less successful, is the Scramble cartridge and Hyperchase, a driving type game. Armour Attack which takes its title from the arcade game is probably the most effective tank game to be found in this field, as vector graphics can fine-tune any gun angle to be more accurate — but it is still far from the best cartridge.

Rip Off and Cosmic Chasm are two of the best games on the machine and Mine Storm is also a good choice as built-in game.

The Vectrex will appeal to households where the family TV is under pressure or the youngster who wants to play undisturbed in his own bedroom. The game range could be more extensive but those so far out are cheap and very playable. An interesting development which I will watch with interest.

What are Atari playing at? That is a question that must be on many a VCS owner's mind as the company's place as number one in the video games market comes under threat from all sides.

Atari's answer will be launched in the UK this summer in the shape of the 5200.

The new machine comes out in direct competition with the other two systems that have beaten it to the shops.

Like the Colecovision the 5200 offers a converter to woo VCS owners who would then not have to sell off their existing library of games.

The 5200 has a whopping Ram — 64K of brute computer power — under its sleek black and chrome exterior. This means that when the machine goes on sale, it will pack more power than all the popular microcomputers currently on sale in the UK.

The 5200 is therefore not merely an Atari 800 without a keyboard as early criticisms of the machine suggested. This fact is borne out by some of the software. Missile Command, Centipede, and Defender are all noticable improvements on the 400/800 versions.

Despite this — the launch range of software for the 5200 is simply not as exciting as that which is available for the Colecovision. Games like Super Breakout, Invaders, Galaxians, Football and Star Raiders were all classics in their day but they are not new and they are not exclusive to the 5200. In other words we have seen them before and they seem stale in comparison to the Colecovision titles.

This imbalance is not likely to be the case for long. Atari has learned the hard way about the importance of software and has big plans to support the 5200 with "name" games. The first of these "name" games is likely to be Pole Position — which is almost ready for release. And don't forget that Atari own Pacman and (better still) Ms Pacman, which we should see available for the 5200 very soon. Atari's latest release for the 400/800 Qix, will also be one of the range of 13 games available for the new system when it hits the shops later this summer.

The joysticks are a much-needed improvement on the widely criticised VCS sticks. Slimline, with a stubby stick and side mounted fire buttons the sticks also have a keypad for making game selections.

A trackball is also in the pipeline for the 5200 for use in games like Missile Command and Centipede.

When one system has noticably more games available for it than for the other this then becomes the winner. What you have to decide at this stage is which games you like the best and make your choice of hardware on that basis.

Games for the 5200 will retail at £29.95.

A price has not been confirmed on the 5200 itself but common sense would suggest that it would be around about the same as the Colecovision £149.

But add-ons like keyboards and software adaptors will play an ever bigger role in consumer choice in the future.

Questions & Answers

Over recent months we have been deluged with a whole gamut of searing questions on TV games centres.

Many are about the promise of add-ons, new machines and all the hows, where's and whens which make up crossed "t"s and dotted "i"s that are not the stuff of coming-soon promises.

We've tackled a few companies, asked a few probing questions ourselves and where possible come up with the answers to some of your more common queries.

For those answers, read on.

* * *

Dear Sir,
I was always a keen space invaders player in the arcades down here in Portsmouth and have often wondered about the Atari version of the game and whether I would save money by buying a VCS system on which to practise my alien bashing.

One reason I have waited thus long, is that my invaders game is based on 300 point saucers, picked off at the right points in the game. Does the Atari follow a similar system.
K Howard

The Atari space invaders follows the 22-14 system of scoring top marks on space invaders . That is fire 22 shots before hitting the first saucer and it will be worth 300 points. Than every 14th shot from then on, wait for a saucer to ensure maximum points each time.

* * *

Dear Sir,
I have been hankering after a TV Games centre for two years now-mainly the Atari VCS but I have now redoubled my efforts with the hope of getting a Colecovision.

I thought I was just about to talk my parents into it, when one of them read somewhere that TV games centres can actually ruin your television's ordinary picture, by ingraining itself on the screen and leaving a ghostly image.

Are they right or can you put my Dad's mind at rest on this point.
Tim Orlando

This rumour that games centres can effect a TV's output is a hangover from the very early days. Then if a screen picture stayed unchanged for any length of time, it could "burn" itself onto the screen, leaving a ghostly image across regular TV programmes.

But nowadays, the games centre companies are all too aware of the problems and write games which constantly change the display on screen and so, eliminate the possibility of this happening.

So put your parents' minds at rest. The Colecovision actually switches itself off long before any damage can happen to the screen, leaving the screen blank. And the Atari too has a constantly changing display on all its games.

* * *

Dear Sir,
A friend recently returned from the States brought back a US games magazine which had an advert for a new Atari VCS game, called Swordquest, in it.

The game comes in several parts and offers a prize for the first person to solve it. Obviously Atari had thrown a lot of weight behind the title and I wondered why you had never covered it in the Video Screens section.
Roddy Lyman

The answer is simply that Atari don't plan to release Swordquest in the UK Roddy. The game actually comes in four separate cartridges and the idea behind it is that you have to solve the first adventure-style cartridge before you can progress onto the second.

It sounds right up Keith Campbell's street but unfortunately we've not been able to get our hands on one.

* * *

Dear Sir,
I am fascinated to learn how Atari defends its rights to Pacman when so many other companies in the arcade industry seem to have launched variants of Packman, Picman, Puckman and Mazeman.

How does the licensing of games allow for these differences. And if, as currently seems to be the case, Atari are the only company to battle in the courts to protect their licenses, should we all buy Atari VCSs in the belief that all games they haven't actually grabbed the license to, will come out anyway I would particularly like to know if Atari plan to copy Zaxxon onto their VCS system.
H. Casbourne

The arcade games industry's Pacman variants were produced before the copyrighting of arcade games ideas really took hold in this country. Atari are not grabbing every arcade game license in sight. Colecovision has Sega and Nintendo signed up, while Mattel's Burgertime and Lock n' Chase from Euro Deco, both seem to be thriving.

Finally, I wouldn't hold your breath waiting for the Atari version of Zaxxon. Coleco holds the license to this game and while they do bring out VCS cartridges, Colecovision has not produced Zaxxon so far — presumably because it makes too many demands on the Atari graphics.

* * *

Dear Sir,
I feel the Vectrex may be the machine for me as our only TV already has too many claims on its time. But having seen a few pictures of the Vectrex, I am under the impression that it has colours on screen, but a friend of mine tells me that this is not so.

Please can you fill me in?
G Hardy

The Vectrex features only two colours on its screen display which resembles the kind of picture created in Asteroids. However it gets around this by enclosing a screen overlay with each game.

This overlay is set in place on screen and effectively alters the colours of craft as they move up or across the screen.

* * *

Dear Sir,
Why don't you increase your high scores section to include a note about the current video games (home division) champions.

I have recently scored 67,820 on Pitfall and would like to find out if I am ahead of the pack of Pitfall owners. I wondered whether any of your readers had bettered this score.

Perhaps you could start up a regular note of the high scores on video games.
Derek Rose

The highest score I have so far come across on Pitfall Derek, is 109,928 scored by David Bishop of Beaconsfield, Bucks. David puts his success down to mapping out each of the 256 screens.

We are certainly interested in your idea of top scores for TV games centre cartridges but would need a photograph of the screen to really give the scores authenticity.

* * *

Dear Sir,
I am a keen computer game and physical sports fan and have always been disappointed in the way sports games have been represented on the video games scene.

While everybody was raving about Intellivion's soccer, I found myself upset that little of the feel for the individual racing up field taking players on and threading through a good pass.

Athletics and boxing seem to have suffered from a similar blight on the graphics side. Are we ever going to get a realistic sports simulation game or will only motor racing enthusiasts find satisfaction from their TV games.
A Jeffreys

The latest generation of video games and the new breed of games programmers have combined to give you what I think you want, Mr Jeffreys. Colecovision has a couple of new games coming which may fit the bill.

Boxing is still seen from outside the screen except that it features recognisable boxers, Rocky and The Champ in a cartridge based around the movie-world's favourite boxer.

The Baseball game for the same machine, is faced with another problem. It shows a view from just behind the striker with the pitcher in the distance lining up his throw. The three bases appear in small screens on the main picture, to show which are occupied.

Gaming Tomorrow

The next generation of arcade games will feature laser disc technology, featuring filmed action reacting to a player's skill and actions.

Sega did the pioneering work on the laser disc and produced a prototype callked Astron Belt last October. The result is of a film appearing on a video screen with the player's spaceship looking out on alien fleets of attacking craft.

It adds new realism, especially in arcade cockpit models. Astron Belt uses minutes of film detailing a space chase and fitting in explosion scenes when the player finds his target. It could be hooked up to a "vibra-seat" which shudders realistically under impact of battle.

The quest for realism could soon have a player almost believing he is involved in a Star Wars space battle.

A surprise bonus is that this technology is all too accessible for the home market with videodisc systems hooked up to home computers and many analysts are predicting that the disc player will be the most important computer add-on by 1986.

The next possibility may be holophonic sound adding realism to the ears as well as the eyes. So far a rock group called Psychic TV are the main experimenters with Holophonic sound, using a real human skull and a top secret plasma to recreate sound as it happens to a human head.

According to our correspondant Kevin Woodman, it gives an "uncanny reality far beyond a stereo effect."

So realism lurks around every corner, we asked Steve Bloom, former editor of US magazine *Video Games,* to get two top games designers' reactions to the future of video gaming.

THE GAMES DESIGNERS VIEW

Video games is just about to take another technological leap past sundry aliens and eight-way joysticks.

What's in store for '83 and beyond? I asked two of the world's foremost video games designers for an answer. Who should know better than Eugene Jarvis (Robotron, Stargate, Defender) and Tim Skelly (Reactor, Star Castle, Rip Off)?

Both are excited about Dragon's Lair, a laserdisc game created by Starcom in association with Cinematronics which was showcased at the Amusement Operators' Expo last March in Chicago.

Dragon's Lair, the second such laserdisc game experiment (Sega's Astron Belt was the first), is a fully-animated sword-and-sorcery cartoon featuring a character named Dirk the Daring.

You control Dirk as he swashbuckles through a castle loaded with scorpions, snakes, trap doors, pools of fire. At first it's difficult to tell that Dirk indeed is waiting for your instructions, but you get the hang of it after awhile.

"I liked it a lot," says Skelly. "The graphics are terrific." Jarvis agrees, but beyond that he had problems with the black-time (each time the scene changes the screen blacks out momentarily). However, he liked being burnt up, which is one of the many penalties for not timing an action, such as swinging on ropes just right.

Dragon's Lair is scheduled to go into production this summer. It will be priced by distributors somewhere between $3,000 and $4,000. Sega's Astron Belt, which takes you on a rather rocky tour of the galaxy, should also be rolling off the belts and into arcades shortly.

Skelly wonders whether disc wouldn't be more practical for play at home. "All you'd have to do is plug a joystick with a microprocessor in it into a laser disc system," he says. "Imagine selling 100,000 copies of one disc instead of 5,000 incredibly expensive arcade pieces. I think economics will drive the technology into the home."

There is also the question of gameplay. Dragon's Lair allows you to only control the decision points and nothing else. "You're limited to certain preset actions," complains Jarvis. "It works within a linear format like Jungle Hunt – all you have to do is time something and press a button. You make it or you don't. Personally, I'm into more freedom. I don't want to get stuck on canned scenes. As a designer I'm more into the computer generation of games."

Jarvis is presently working on a system that may rewrite the definition of 3-D as we know it. He has set his sights on creating, "an illusion of depth and the thickness of life" on the video screen. "The new wave," he insists, "will be 3-D objects with 2-D gameplay." These objects, like some of those found in Atari's Xevious are colourful, shaded, and high in resolution.

According to Jarvis, the arcade game business is becoming more like the movie business everyday. The new technology he's talking about takes more time and money than most companies are willing to spend. It also requires a tremendous amount of data to, "represent all those objects and angles. Soon it won't be unheard of to spend $1.2 million on developing a game."

Money may definitely be what prevents the arcade manufacturers from taking the leap from stand-up cabinet games to sophisticated booth games. In the video game booth of the future there are several monitors or widescreens, stereophonic sound, a variety of joysticks and controllers, voice interaction, and a mind-boggling array of laserdisc and computer-generated games to choose from.

"Isolated environment games," says Jarvis, "Will have better audio and video but you have to have something else to justify the multi-screens. You need more input. Let's use brainwaves, use voice so that you can yell at the game. People want something else, they want to fly somewhere for an *hour,* not 90 seconds.

For the meanwhile, players are just going to have to live with improved graphics, the laserdisc experiments, and a new wrinkle or two, until the spectacular can be priced down to the affordable.

Skelly think space games are still the best shooting games and expects to see a lot more of them. In fact, both Jarvis and Skelly agree that the best game in the US arcades right now is Sinistar, a space epic from Williams.

Swap Shop

Trade in a tired title

COMBAT
AIR-SEA BATTLE
BASIC MATH
OUTLAW
MINIATURE GOLF
CIRCUS ATARI
VIDEO CHESS
STREET RACER
SPACE WAR
VIDEO OLYMPICS
BREAKOUT
BASIC PROGRAMMING
ADVENTURE
SPACE INVADE
ATARI

Do you have a games cartridge you're tired of? That one languishing at the back of your collection, mastered in some earlier rush of enthusiasm and now mentally stamped: "Beaten!" If so, perhaps it's time to give it up for one of those cartridges, you always hoped to try but never got around to buying.

Computer & Video Games is setting itself up as the middle man to try and put a new challenge into your life.

As a one-off experiment we have produced a form at the bottom of the page which will help to fit together games' players with different titles who would benefit from a swap.

If the scheme proves itself a success we may try it again at a later date. In the meantime, shuffle back through your collection and see if there are any titles you can bear to part with.

Obviously there will be few people yet ready to swap one of the new games and you should try to resist asking for the latest "hot" games.

We are much more likely to find a match for your unused cartridges if you make reasonable demands in your choice of what you would like in return.

Fill in the form below, first stating your name and address and then letting us know which TV games system you own and are interested in swapping games on. We cannot currently open this idea to hardware or computer games but we may do so if this test proves popular enough.

We have also left space for you to let us know which cartridges have ceased to be a challenge. You can place up to five in this category. Please make sure that it is still in working condition and comes complete with instructions.

And if you feel that any of the titles may be unfamiliar to others, please add a short description of how it plays.

Then add a list of up to five cartridges you would like to swap yours for. Or, if you are easy to please, make it a list of cartridges you already own or would not consider as swaps.

A phone number may help to speed the process on its way.

And please send the form back to us at **Swap Shop, Computer & Video Games, Durrant House, Herbal Hill, London EC1R 5JB.** Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope so we can reply and let you know who we think may be your best bet as a swapster.

We will send back details of someone with a yen for one of your cartridges and a title to swap which you are interested in.

Then it's up to the two of you. If we don't find a suitable swapper we may not be able to come back to you.

Please do not send off the cartridges to us and I'm afraid we can make no guarantees about the quality of the cartridges involved in the deal.

Include me in your swap please

I own a .... TV games system

The titles I would like to exchange are:

1) .... **2)** ....

Description .... **Description** ....

....

3) .... **4)** ....

Description .... **Description** ....

....

5) ....

Description ....

....

FILL IN NO MORE THAN FIVE PLEASE

The titles I am particularly/definitely not* interested in receiving are:

1) .... **2)** ....

3) .... **4)** ....

5) .... **(*cross out whichever is not applicable)**

Ny name is: ....

Address: ....

....

.... **Tel:** ....

DATA AGE

Dare you brave the dangers of the Bermuda Triangle where so many ships jets and people have disappeared in mysterious circumstances.

US software firm, Data Age takes you right into the middle of this strange and sinister part of the oceans in their latest cartridge for the Atari VCS, Bermuda Triangle.

You are in command of a mini-sub, which is exploring the waters of the Triangle, when you discover a mysterious city filled with treasures which you want to transport back to the surface and your mother ship. But there are many wierd and wonderful creatures and machines from this long dead civilisation beneath the waves which will attempt to prevent you looting this lost city.

Giant squids and sharks will steal the treasure away from your mini-sub and there are aquatic drone ships and mines which will disrupt your treasure seeking. Meanwhile on the surface an enemy ship lurks, waiting to des- should you surface and find yourself in its path.

Also on the seabed there lurks the deadly Bermuda bomb. If you attempt to lift this to the surface your mission will end with a bang.

Your sub is equipped with a tractor-beam to snatch the treasures from the bottom of the sea and a missile launcher to blast away at the assorted nasties that come after you. Points are awarded on a rising scale with the mines winning you the most points. The cartridge should cost around £20 when Data Age finalise negotiations to import the game into this country.

TRON

The Disney picture *Tron* has spawned a number of video games, and that's only logical – *Tron* itself was a video game come to life.

Adventures of Tron from Mattel's M Network for the Atari VCS could almost be called "Donkey Tron".

It bears many features in common with the monkey game – you jump, you collect prizes for points, you go up, you go down. You also get killed a lot more frequently.

You are Tron, running around a playfield with four floors. In the center of the screen is an input/output beam which will take you down but not up.

On either side of the beam are elevators. They're the only way you can go up to the next floor. Your numerous enemies include Recognizers, Grid Bugs and Tanks. While the first two will simply smash into you, Tanks also fire mortar shells.

To avoid these dangers you use your fire button to jump. On the upper floors, however, it's wisest to drop to a floor below.

In order to score points you must leap up and collect "bits". The higher the floor you're on, the more points per bit. You also can hitch a ride on a "solar sailer" (that's the accepted Disney spelling) and get out of danger. What you can't do is catch your breath.

The action is non-stop and probably too fast and furious for anyone who is not part frog and skilled in intercepting fast-moving objects.

Victory is yours when you succeed in snagging all seven bits. This puts you into a new screen with the same action, only worse. Subsequent screens are reached by scoring 2,000 bonus points.

Although Adventures of Tron is tough, it has some nice touches. For example, you can leap off a floor at any point. If you couldn't, the game would be unplayable – it's impossible to leap enemies on the upper floors. You can also control the rate of ascent by elevator or descent by beam by using your joystick. The graphics are good.

Tron himself is constantly in a running posture, which is appropriate. If he stops, he's dead. A drawback is that it's extremely difficult for Tron to make a running leap. He just doesn't have enough to work up a head of steam.

If you get any good at all, you'll probably keep playing until you get better. There's a good chance, though, that you'll give up quickly.

STAR STRIKE

Imagine! A video game that recreates the 3D effect of being inside a fighter rocket, beset on all sides by aliens thirsting for blood, with only seconds to save the planet.

That's what the designers of Star Strike at M Network imagined. Too bad they couldn't pull it off. It's an interesting game but it fails royally to live up to its promise.

You fly your ship at high speed through a "launch trench", hitting the sides of which spells instant death. You are attacked from the rear by alien fighters and from the front by meteor missiles. Your real enemies, though, are the alien missile silos which sit on the bottom of the trench. You have to destroy all eight of them before the Earth, which begins in the upper left of the screen, moves to the center.

Now here's the tough part. Got your pencils ready? Good. You can't shoot aliens from inside the trench. You also can't shoot them until they overtake you and move in front of your ship. You can't shoot meteor missiles from inside the trench, either.

Silos, however, you can bomb from inside the trench. You can't bomb them from outside the trench, though. When you're hit by an alien or a meteor missile you lose altitude or go out of control, and if you hit the sides or bottom of the trench, you die. Did I mention you have only one ship!

The only choice of action that makes any sense in Star Strike is avoidance. This has got to be the first video game in which you get no points. That's right, nothing. And only one ship. If you bomb all eight silos, you win.

There are several difficulty levels and the most difficult is unplayable. In that level the meteor missiles are "smart bombs" which home right in on you, while the time limit for saving the planet is about 10 seconds. Give up, I say.

The best graphics of the game are seen when you lose. At that point the aliens launch a rocket right up the trench and blow the Earth to smithereens.

It should be noted that the Star Strike for the Intellivision does realize most of the intentions of the designers – plus you get points. Why the VCS version is so inferior is anybody's guess.

VENTURE

US games experts were nonplussed when a poll of Colecovision owners chose Venture as their favourite cartridge in front of Zaxxon and Donkey Kong. but a quick sortie through the perilous chambers of this dungeon with its catchy tunes and gyrating terrors, soon turn a casual game into a fevered assault on yet new rooms and more treasures.

The game has three levels of dungeons, each repeated to give a six level adventure. You take the part of Winkie armed with a bow and arrow which fires in the direction you are moving.

Starting off as a small helpless dot you Venture into a room, try to deal with its occupants and escape with the treasure before an invulnerable ghoul wanders in to catch you.

As you enter the room there's a change in scale to bring both yourself and the monsters up to lifesize. The ghouls enter with a chilling tone which sets your pulse racing even before you head for the door.

Snakes, trolls, spiders and skeletons await with tricks and traps and the ghouls patrol the corridors and must be avoided.

Four skill levels and hours of addictive fun await for £29.95 but watch out for the Dragon Room on level II and my own particular bugbear, the Ghosts' Room.

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RIVER RAID

Activision's newest release for the VCS introduces the most useless aviational invention since Leonardo Da Vinci's steam driven flying machine. Can you believe it — an airplane that only flies over rivers.

You must be careful to fly within the blue areas of the screen which represent the river. Fly into the green areas and you are adjudged to have dropped in height and crash into the river bank.

None of this detracts from the playability of River Raid — which is basically a Scramble type game.

Just as in Scramble the real enjoyment of the game is in the challenge it sets you to get further. Blasting the enemy as you fly is really secondary.

The river is constantly twisting and turning and you will need considerable skill to fly through some of the narrow inlets and around the larger islands.

Enemy targets vary in toughness and points are awarded accordingly. Easiest of all are the tankers which move slowly across the surface of the river and can be picked off like sitting ducks.

Helicopter's and jets are much tougher — particularly the jets which zoom across the screen in both directions always at a head-on trajectory for your plane.

At the end of each section of the river is a bridge which you will have to blast to get on to the next stage. The bridge is an easy target for which you are awarded the disproportionally large number of 500 points.

A limited fuel supply adds to the difficulty of the game. When your fuel gauge needle is edging towards Empty you will need to fly over some fuel depots to get it back up towards full. Flying over fuel dumps also has the effect of accelerating your plane. This is where the game is at its best — when you are scrolling quickly forward blasting a flight path for your plane.

Scoring 15,000 points at River Raid qualifies you for membership of the River Raiders Club and to receive an emblem.

Real super heroes who want to aim at the maximum one million points will see all points on the screen turn to exclaimation marks if they achieve this.

So get blasting and, if you do manage to clock up that elusive million, drop us a photograph of the screen and we'll give you a free copy of Activision's other new release Spider Fighter.

River Raid is not the most original new release from Activision in recent months but if you like scrolling shoot 'em ups you will be hard pressed to find a better one for the VCS. £29.95.

MS. PACMAN

Ms Pacman on the Atari will put her male predecessor out of a job. No-one should buy the original when this Ms hits the market.

But by the same token the game is not really different enough to warrant adding this cartridge to the original. It's Pacman as the Atari designers realised they should have done it given a little more time and programming practice.

The ghostly flicker is still there but not as obvious and the ghosts come in four different colours. The whole game is brighter and also more difficult than the original which spread bonus lives around as though there was no tomorrow.

Here only one bonus life arrives. Our little Ms rushes about the series of four mazes eating her energiser dots in the four corners. She is given four tunnel exits and the fruits float around the mazes.

It is easier to see whether the ghosts are edible or if they've turned back into aggressive pursuers and the game is absorbing enough for you to step away from the screen with aching fingers.

My one worry is that the Atari joystick may not be up to the sort of treatment this game will bring down on it — our office one, creaked ominously at the wrenching it was given.

Ms Pacman shows that the Atari programmers are rising to the challenge of the independent software houses and producing games of real quality. It costs £29.99 deserves to rate in the top five Atari VCS games. More power to the feminist movement.

JOURNEY ESCAPE

The first ever rock 'n roll video game is about to go on sale in the UK.

Featuring the top American group Journey who have sold over five million copies of their LP Escape — the game challenges you to get the group safely back to their Scarab escape vehicle.

In order to do this you have to run past the various characters who are the bain of every rock star's life.

They're all here. Love - crazed groupies, shifty eyed promoters and sneaky photographers.

You must run to the right and left to avoid these characters that are scrolling down-screen towards you. Depressing the fire button will enable you to run faster.

The good guys in this game of fame and fortune are the robot-like roadies and the might managers. If you make contact with any of these you can scroll quickly up-screen unmolested.

Journey first became involved in video games through playing coin-operated video games on tour. The band quickly became hooked and now take two home video games systems on tour with them.

The game is manufactured by the American video games firm Data Age which explains the choice of Journey who are not quite so well known in the UK.

Journey Escape and seven other titles — Encounter at L-5, Airlock, Warplock, Sssnake, Bugs, Bermuda Triangle, and Frankenstein's Monster will all shortly be available for the Atari VCS.

Data Age are currently negotiating an exclusive importership deal with Thorn-EMI to bring the games into the UK though no information is available yet on prices.

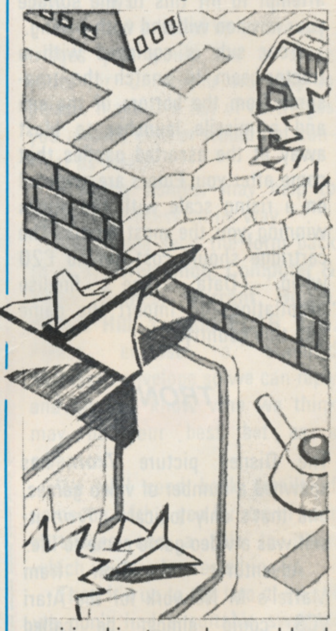
ZAXXON

Donkey Kong may be the first game Colecovision owners take home, but Zaxxon is going to be the best advert for the new system.

The 3D feel to the arcade game is faithfully recreated on the home screen with the plane diving and weaving over the blue space fortress with appropriate sound effects.

There is not quite the same action or detail which can be found on its arcade predecessor, but Colecovision can be proud to have come up with a more playable game.

As with all Colecovision cartridges there is just four levels (for both one or two players) but the difference between each is noticable. Level one takes the beginner into the game, hardly ever requiring him to reach ground level where his plane's guns can be trained on the enemy's fuel and defences.



At the fourth level, everything speeds up, the fortress's own missiles change altitude to try to find you, the fuel leaks away at an alarming rate and more than a couple of seconds above ground level results in a heat-seeking missile being despatched to ground you permanently.

Each level offers an immediate challenge over the fortress wall with two fuel tanks which require an awesome dive and level out 'guns firing' to score on.

Then its over the silos and ground defences, raking fuel dumps and pill-boxes, rounding or dipping over low walls until you come through the forcefield to take on the planes in deepest space. The second fortress features the same problems except that planes are backed up by the sweeping drones and lastly the Zaxxon robot which must be hit six times before it fires its deadly missile.

Often this battle ends in stalemate leaving both you and the robot to fight another day. Marvellous action but at £35 it is more pricy than the other Colecovision cartridges.

DONKEY KONG

Donkey Kong from Colecovision's CBS Electronics label runs on an Intellivision and provides the thrills if not the graphical authenticity of the arcade predecessor.

Where CBS has gone for licensed versions of arcade games, Imagic has made its name with good versions of games similar to arcade favourites but just far enough away to avoid the legal traps.

Now the two styles are in competition in the Intellivision software market with Imagic's Beauty and the Beast, offering a variation on the established arcade theme.

Through three screens of action, the Donkey Kong hero must plan his rescue over scaffolding, climbing unbroken ladders and over half-completed bridges to his damsel.

On reaching the top of each lot of ramps, a series of new screens with other hazards is presented until finally the little man knocks away the supports and sends the gorilla tumbling to the ground.

The game features on-screen scoring, and is complete with beeps, burps and catchy tunes destined to send the rest of the household mad. Put the cash you would have fed the arcade machine aside each time you play, and you will very soon recoup the price, as it's quite addictive!

Beauty and the Beast features a a skyscraper and the villain of the piece who is either a mad man who looks a bit like a gorilla, or a gorilla looking much like a man!

Movement between levels is through windows – but the little man can only enter open ones. Hearts flutter down occasionally, and if caught make the champ temporarily invincible.

To offset this advantage, a bird flies across the screen from time to time, and can knock the unwary fellow off the building. When this happens, depending upon how many stories up the tower he is, the player is treated to a series of screens realistically showing him plummeting. If he succeeds in his quest, a helecopter arrives to rescue the man and maiden from the rooftop.

As each level of the building is completed, a colour picture of the tower and surrounding countryside backs a progress message, accompanied by the inevitable tune, "Not Bad" or "Well done".

Different in detail from, but similar in play to Donkey Kong, my guess is that the latter will be the more popular buy, not purely because it is what everybody's playing in the arcades, but because it offers far more variety!

Donkey Kong is in the shops now at £29.99 and Beauty and the Beast is also available now at the slightly cheaper price of £24.95.

Donkey Kong is now available on three systems. Atari VCS, Intellivision, and Colecovision. By far and away the best of the three is Colecovision's cart for its own system which comes free when you buy the master component.

FROGGER

Parker's Frogger leapt to the top of the charts for the Atari VCS, fresh from its successful debut in the arcades.

But the Intellivision version now released may find the public's love affair with amphibious heroes is over.

I certainly didn't approach this version with the same relish which accompanied my first play with the Atari cartridge last year.

Which is sad because it's the same game with four skill levels of difficulty for both one and two players.

The superior graphics of the Intellivision do not seem to have offered any marked improvements although the frog does execute a nice-leaping action.

For those unfamiliar with the game it features a series of frogs trying desperately to reach their bankside homes, through five crowded lanes of traffic and over a river torrent in which logs swirl downstream while groups of turtles swim doggedly in the opposite direction.

The midway bank is patrolled by deadly snakes, the turtles have a habit of diving from under you as you use them as stepping stones, alligators lurk on some logs, while others are waiting in your bankside homes.

On the plus side, you can pick up lady-frog on route or find a tasty fly meal waiting at home.

Oh yes and there's a time limit on the game too.

It costs £29.95 and should sell well without reaching the giddy heights of the Atari version.

CENTIPEDE

The game is set in a field of mushrooms, which are placed at random on the screen. If the centipede collides with a mushroom it changes direction. It is possible to destroy the mushrooms, and you score extra points for doing so.

Arcade favourite Centipede has just made its way onto the Atari VCS, as addictive as ever but the graphics are not a patch on the original.

The object of the game is to destroy a Centipede which starts at the top of the screen and snakes its way towards your gun at the bottom. If the Centipede hits you one of your three lives is lost. When the animal is completely destroyed a new one,appears at the top of the screen.

Other difficulties from the arcade original, like fleas, mushroom poisoning, scorpions and jumping spiders, have also travelled across to this version and these score extra points if hit.

To destroy a mushroom takes three successive shots and selective gardening can be used to make the Centipede go where you want it.

Atari have tried to make this game as similar as possible to the original and in the design of the game they succeeded. However, the graphics are far from impressive. The gun, for example, is a crude coloured block while the mushrooms are identical blocks differing only in size.

The new Atari 5200 machine – due to be launched here in the Autumn – includes far superior graphics on its version of this game.

I would think twice before forking out the £29.99 which this VCS cartridge costs.

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COSMIC CHASM

Cosmic Chasm is the game that will make the new Vectrex machine from Milton Bradley worth having in your house.

The scenario is simple. You are the pilot of a space craft which has to burrow through the caverns and tunnels of a planet in order to plant a bomb at the planet's core and then escape to safety.

On plugging the cartridge into the Vectrex the player is presented with a map of the caverns within the planet. The position of the ship is marked by a flashing dot in a cavern on the outside of the system.

Then you are plunged into the action. Each cavern is filled with planet protectors — deadly little beasts who will destroy your ship at the merest touch. Luckily you are armed with lasers guns and a force shield which should enable you to beat them off. Once you have destroyed or dodged all the protectors move towards an exit.

Each of the exits is protected by a force field and you have to burrow your way through using your spaceships' drill.

You work out the quickest route to the core using the map – which flashes up between moves showing exactly where you are within the system. Once in the core you meet the deadliest of all the planet protectors. These swarm around you in an attempt to prevent the destruction of their planet. If you manage to drop your bomb you then have just 15 seconds to escape the planet before it blows up. And if you take a wrong turn you'll have to fight yet more nasty protectors. It costs £19.95.

RIP OFF

From the first threatening notes of music, Rip Off which runs on the new all-in-one Vectrex games system weaves its sinister web around you.

Menace is the essence of this game which features some of the best sound effects to be tied to a video game.

You control a limitless supply of guard ships which have been posted to prevent pirates getting into the fuel supply.

The fuel pods are in the centre of the screen and the pirates come in off-screen, heading either straight for the centre, or stopping off on their way to blast your ship.

If a pirate is shot while trying to leave the screen with a fuel pod, that pod will be left all too close to the edge attracting other pirate ships and distracting your guard.

There are six types of pirate and each new type is faster than its predecessors. They start off coming two at a time. When the first two are destroyed a second two of a new type appear. After six pairs have been blasted, they will start to appear three at a time.

It took me a little while to get used to the fact that my own ships were secondary to the fuel supply and that kamikaze crashes into the pirates were almost as effective as blowing them up.

There are 16 game versions, varying from four to eight fuel pods, accuracy and tactics of the raiders, and laser weapons which the pirates wield all too successfully.

The vectorgraphics on the vectrex, make for superb explosions and fast free-flowing action. On the minus side the game is extremely difficult to last for any length of time, as fuel pods disappear before your eyes and the pirates speed in for more.

All Vectrex games retail at £19.95.

PACMAN

This Mattel M Network release turns you into a felon who's engaged in his employment, pursued by four men in blue.

Lock n' Chase is a nifty Pacman variation — you can't attack your pursuers but you can throw obstacles in their path. You have to be a pretty smart thief, though — those obstacles can trip you up as well.

As in the venerable Pacman, your thief must run around a maze collecting dots. In this case the dots represent gold bars. In the centre of the maze bonus bars appear for a limited amount of time. These naturally mean a lot of points if you can steal them.

The police are about as unimaginative as coppers can be, but they are relentless. Occasionally they'll team up and head you off at a nasty corner, but generally they keep a respectful distance. It's your insatiable greed that does you in — you've got to clear the screen of gold, even if it means running into the arms of your captors.

So much for the "chase" part of the game. The "lock" part is more interesting. By pressing the fire button you can throw up a temporary gate behind you, foiling the policemen.

Unfortunately, it can backfire — you may find yourself on the wrong side of one of your own traps. It takes a bit of practice to really figure out how to use your secret weapon, and those gates make this game much more interesting than Pacman. It's more than just a question of running the same maze until you can do it in your sleep.

Another difference is that once you're moving, your thief won't stop until he hits a dead end. This takes a bit of getting used to but really adds to your maneouvrability. Just keep your joystick centred and give it a tap when you want to execute a turn.

After you've cleared the screen you've still got to make good your escape by getting out a door that has been locked to you, while there was gold to be had. Then the whole thing starts again.

The graphics are none too interesting but the play value is enough to bring you back for more.

SPIDER FIGHTER

If you are hoping to win a rosette this Summer at the Garden Fete for your prize fruits then Activision's new Spider Fighter will give you nightmares.

This computerised allotment is inhabited by a thieving assortment of creepy crawlies who are intent on stealing your oranges, strawberries, bananas and grapes.

You must blast the insects before they can get away with your fruit. The blaster can be moved right and left across the bottom of the screen and is capable of rapid fire.

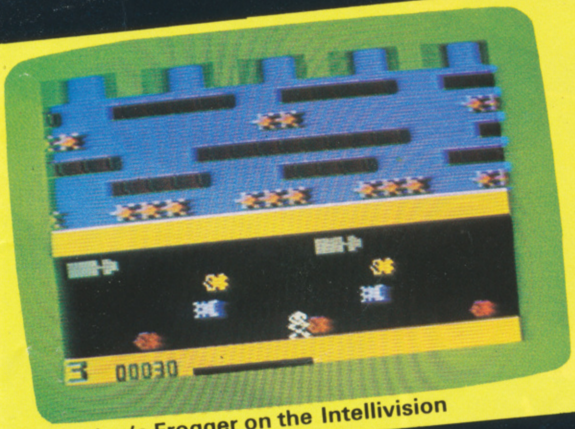
The insects' ringleader is a nasty piece of work called a Master Nest. This opponent is worth a maximum 100 points as it is protected by a white band which makes it impervious to your blaster fire until it has released its Spy Pods, Green Widows, and Stingers.

These will keep you busy while the Master Nest nips in and helps itself to an orange or a strawberry. Stingers are particularly difficult to hit and track your blaster single mindedly across the screen. The best way to deal with all of the insects is to spray the top left of the screen with blaster fire as soon as they appear.

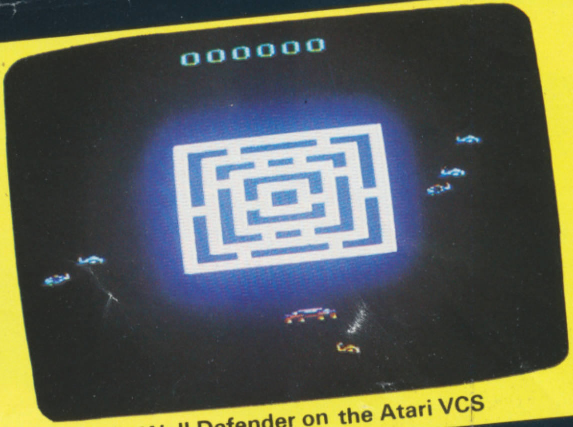
If you can kill all the insects in a wave before they get any of your fruit and still have four blasters in reserve there is a 500 point bonus in it for you.

You can also win a badge and become an official member of the Spider Fighters Club if you score over 40,000 points. Simply take a picture of the screen and send it off to Ray Hodges Associates, 5–7 Forlease Road, Maidenhead, Berks. This is also the address for the Pitfall Harry Explorers' Club, and River Raiders' Club.

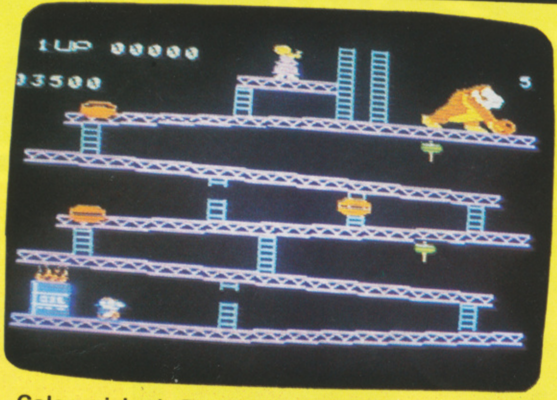
Spider Fighter is available from your local Activision stockists now at £29.95. A frenetic shoot 'em up with colourful graphics but somewhat lacking in originality for a real rave review.



Parker's Frogger on the Intellivision



Bomb's Wall Defender on the Atari VCS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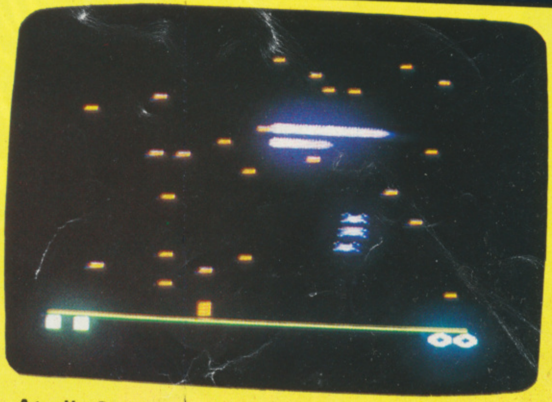
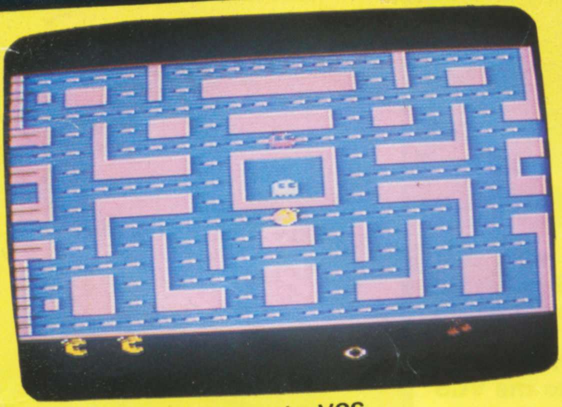
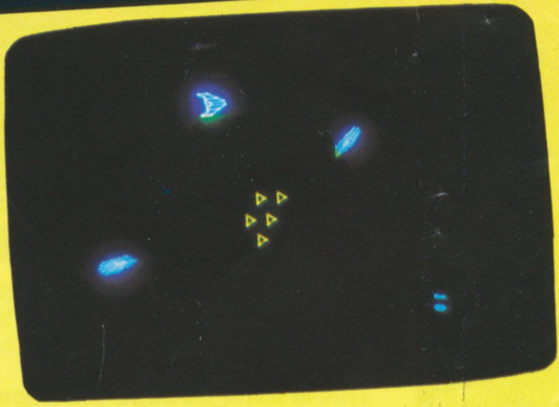
Colecovision's Donkey Kong: first screen



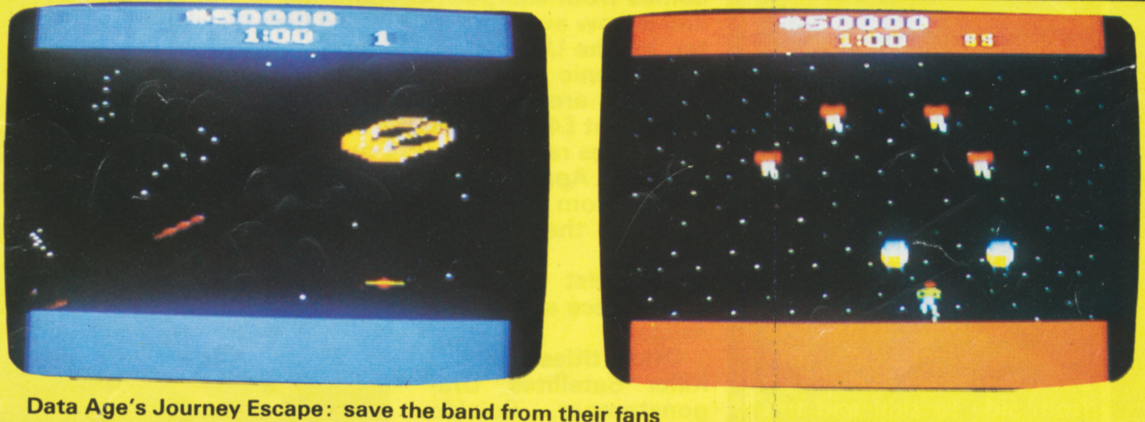
Atari's Centipede on the VCS



Atari's Ms Pacman on the VCS



Vectrex's Rip Off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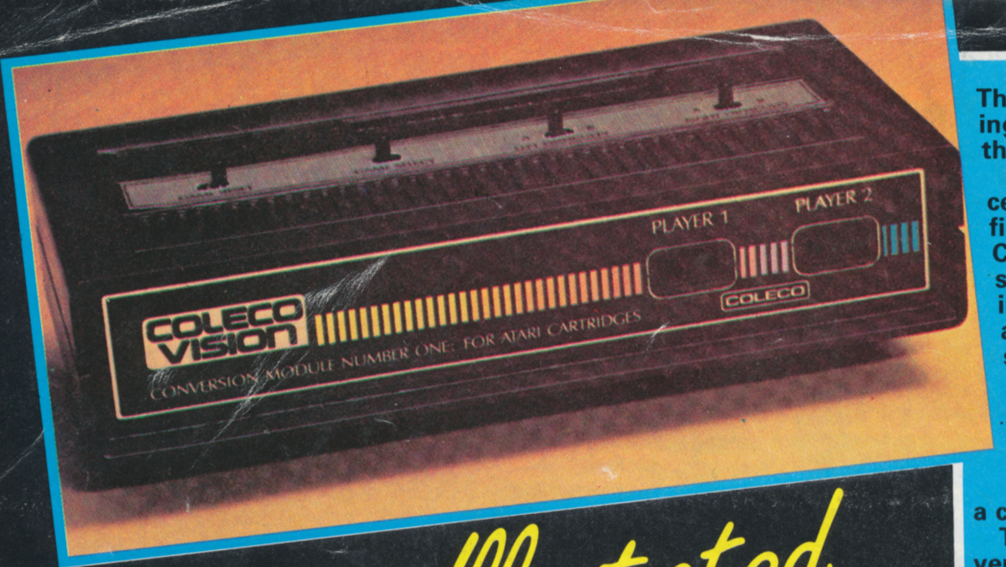
Data Age's Journey Escape: save the band from their fans

Illustrated News



This little box of tricks is causing a lot of fuss in the US at the moment.

Atari has taken legal proceedings to stop it ever finding its way onto the Colecovision. It's the conversion module which plugs into the Colecovision and allows you to play Atari software on the new machine.

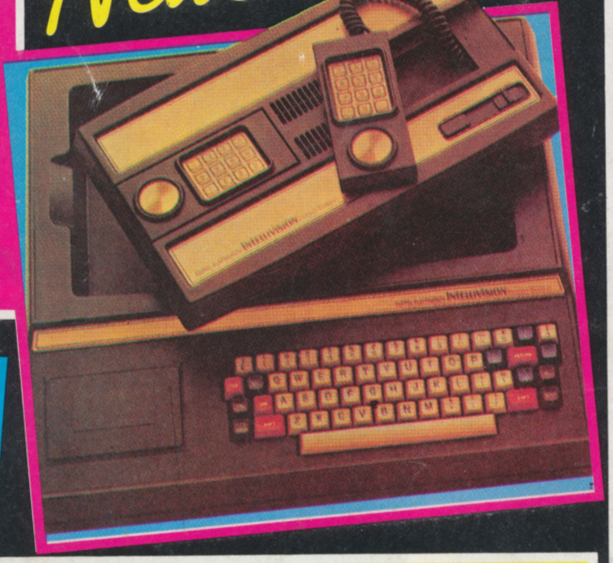
Atari is trying to get the courts to award it $350 million in damages from Coleco while Coleco has filed a countersuit for $500 million.

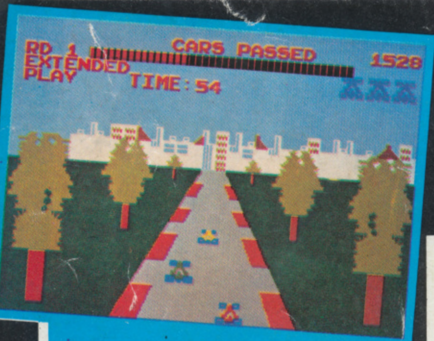
The expansion module is very important to the fledgling machine and it is confident of winning the case and getting this box of tricks into the marketplace.

The Intellivision keyboard is here at last. Well not here exactly but in the US and with the promise that it will be released here in September.

The unit includes a keyboard and is claimed by Mattel to be fully capable of performing all the functions of a home computer when it is plugged into the Intellivision.

It has a built-in Basic and although the UK price has still to be finalised, it is expected to sell for around $150 in the US.





If you have found it hard to relate to driving games which rely on two keys to turn you left or right then you'll want to try Colecovision's Turbo.

The race game which sped through the arcades has translated well to the TV games system with the help of a driving wheel module, complete with floor-level accelerator.

The steering wheel comes on a plug-in module which needs its own batteries to power the unit. Suckers keep the module steady on the table-top as you wrench it from side to side and the joystick slips inside to be used as a gear lever.

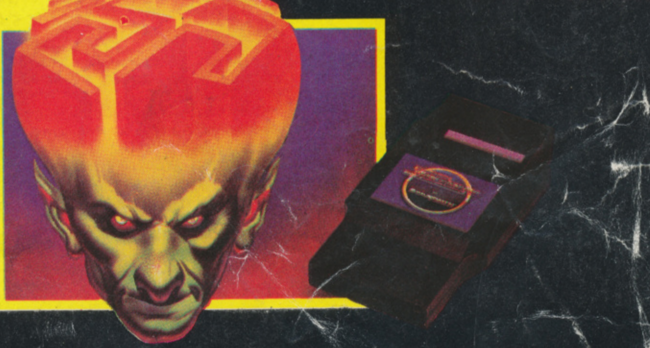
Escape from Mind Master is the main title behind a new range of Atari VCS software which is loaded into the machine by cassette — computer style.

This is done through the Supercharger cartridge which is initially plugged into the VCS just like any other cartridge.

The Supercharger and its range of games comes from Starpath Corporation in the US and is now available through an Irish distributer, for the UK market.

Electronic Leisure Products of Raheen in Limerick are advertising the Supercharger at £44.50 while the cassette titles range from £14 to £16.65. Apart from Escape from the Mindmaster, there's the already infamous Communist Mutants from Space also in the range.

Other titles include: Killer Satellites, Dragonstomper, Suicide Mission, Phaser Patrol and Fireball.



Richard Levene is one of Imagic's band of top designers. Here he is pictured expounding on the thoughts behind his latest creation, Trucking, still not seen over this side of the Atlantic.

Richard is given a further opportunity to explain how he brings the games he creates off the drawing board and into your homes on page 6 of this supplement. He is one of an exclusive band of US video games designers who have been finding time between producing new video games masterpieces, to talk to Eugene Lacey about their art.

You can meet the men behind E.T., Raiders of the Lost Ark, Microsurgeon and Pitfall Harry inside.